Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 32, line 21 with the following amended paragraph:

YIGSR (SEQ ID NO:1): amide-terminated pentapeptide (tyrosine-isoleucine-glycine-serine-arginine)

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 34, line 24 with the following amended paragraph:

A terpolymer, containing the pentapeptide YIGSR (SEQ ID NO:1) (a nerve cell attachment motif), was synthesized by mixing the terpolymer prepared in Example 2 (1.0 g) with 2.8 μg of laminin pentapeptide (YIGSR (SEQ ID NO:1), from Novabiochem) in N,N-dimethyl formamide. After reaction for 48 h at room temperature (21° C), the polymer product was precipitated out from diethyl ether and then vacuum dried. ASI groups remaining after reaction with the pentapeptide are available for subsequent reaction with collagen. The structure of this polymer is shown in Figure 8A.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 35, line 28 with the following amended paragraph:

Cross-linked hydrogels of collagen-terpolymer comprising YIGSR (SEQ ID NO:1) cell adhesion factor were prepared by thoroughly mixing viscous, neutralized 4% bovine collagen (1.2 ml) with terpolymer to which laminin pentapeptide (YIGSR) (SEQ ID NO:1) was covalently attached (from Example 3; 0.34 ml, 100 mg/ml) at 4° C, following the procedure described in Example 4.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 36, line 1 with the following amended paragraph:

The YIGSR (SEQ ID NO:1) content of extensively washed gels was 4.3×10^{-11} mole/ml (2.6×10^{-8} g/ml) of hydrated gel quantified by labelling the tyrosine (primary amine-bearing) groups with ^{125}I using the Iodogen method and measuring the radioactivity with a standardised gamma counter (Beckman, Gamma 5500). The final, total polymer concentration in each hydrated, PBS-equilibrated hydrogel was 3.4 w/v % (comprising collagen and YIGSR (SEQ ID NO:1) terpolymer at 2.0 and 1.4 w/v %, respectively.